

**WHITMAN COUNTY
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
PUBLIC HEARING – VAR 25-002
10-30-2025
MINUTES**

Public Service Auditorium and broadcasted via ZOOM

IN-PERSON MEMBERS:

Larry Cochran – BOA Chair
Michael Cochran – BOA Member
Brian Davies- BOA Member

IN-PERSON STAFF:

Grace Di Biase – Whitman County Assistant Planner
Brandon Johnson – Public Works
David Werner – Clerk

ZOOM ATTENDEES:

Ryan Kile – BOA Member
Alan Thomson- Whitman County Planner
Julie -Member of the Public

AUDIENCE:

Megan C. Howell- Pullman
Drew Howell- Pullman

7:04 p.m. – Larry Cochran opened Public Hearing **VAR 25-002**.

Applicant: *Drew Howell on behalf of John R. Howell, Inc.*

Requests: *A variance from the Agricultural District view shed requirement.*

Location: *A site address and driveway access onto Reid Road is yet to be determined in the SE ¼ of Section 18, Township 15 N. Range 45 E. W.M., Whitman County, Washington*

Larry Cochran – We have one variance to talk about. Variance 25-002

Larry Cochran – With us tonight, I'm Larry Cochran, Mike Cochran, Brian Davies and Ryan Kile is online.

Larry Cochran- And I'll read the... the applicant is Drew Howell on behalf of John Howell... John R. Howell incorporated. Requesting a variance from the Agricultural District viewshed requirement.

Larry Cochran- Location: a site address and driveway access onto Reid Road is yet to be determined. In the southeast quarter of Section 18, Township 15 North, Range 45 East, Willamette Meridan, Whitman County, Washington.

FINDING OF FACTS

Larry Cochran- On October 3rd, 2025, Drew Howell requested a variance from the Agricultural District viewshed requirement. See Exhibit 1, application.

Larry Cochran- The driveway access will be onto Reid Road, and a site address is yet to be determined in the southeast quarter of Section 18, Township 15 North, Range 45 East, Willamette Meridan, Whitman County, Washington. See Exhibit 2, vicinity map, Exhibit 3 aerial.

Larry Cochran- Section 19.10.060(A)(1)(c), in the case of a parcel of land in existence, prior to January 1st, 2007, if the parcel is within an adjacent viewshed, then a variance to the viewshed rule is required. See Exhibit 4, Section 19.10.060(A)(1)(c).

Larry Cochran- The applicant proposes to construct a new residence onto a 10-acre parcel that has been in existence prior to January 1st, 2007. Due to the size and location of the parcel, the applicant is unable to be outside of the viewshed of 8 neighboring residences. A variance is required from the Board of Adjustment to construct a new residence within a viewshed.

So, what is the requirement for the distance of a view... for residents in a viewshed. How many feet?

Grace Di Biase- Can you rephrase your question?

Micheal Cochran- I think it's 1,500.

Larry Cochran- Is it 1,500 feet.

Grace Di Biase- In 2007, the Planning Commission created a viewshed rule, which is when you can't have residences within 1,500 feet of other residences, but there are some caveats, including if you're building on a parcel of land that hasn't been altered since that code came into play. Since he cannot be outside of 1,500 feet of other residences, he has to be granted a variance in order to be issued a Rural Housing Certificate, and then be able to apply for a building permit for a new residence.

Larry Cochran- Okay

Larry Cochran- The parcel is located approximately 1.8 miles northwest of the City of Pullman and it's surrounded by farmland and residences on all sides. There are 8 residences within 1,500 feet of the 10-acre site. 2301 Banner Road, 2451 Banner Road, 2501 Banner Road, 2532 Banner Road, 2581 Banner Road, 2852 Banner Road, 301 Reid Road and 341 Reid Road. Staff has determined this variance will not be detrimental to public welfare, or adjacent property uses.

Larry Cochran- It's probably a stupid question, but you could almost consider this a cluster?

Grace Di Biase- The Cluster Residential District is specific zone that surrounds the City of Pullman, where 20 acres were divided into four parcels of land, approximately five acres each, with the intention of residential use. That's not the same as what's occurring here. We have quite a number of residences in this area. I'd say it's sort of atypical. But one could look at it as a cluster, but it is not formally at all related to the Cluster Residential District.

Larry Cochran- Okay it's just a different definition. Thank you.

Larry Cochran- There are no critical areas such as jurisdictional wetlands or floodplains on site. See Exhibit 5, floodplain map, and Exhibit 6 wetland map.

Larry Cochran- On October 8th, 2025, all landowners within 300 feet of the site were notified by certified mail of the variance application and Board of Adjustment hearing. On October 16th, 2025, landowners within 1,500 feet of the site were notified as decided by the County Planner due to the proximity of close-by residences. On October 16th, 2025, a legal advertisement was placed in the Gazette to notify the public of the Board of Adjustment hearing. The written comment period for the variance ends at 5 p.m. on October 30th, 2025. No comments from adjacent landowners or the public have been received. See Exhibit 7, affidavit of mailing within 300 feet, Exhibit 8, affidavit of mailing within 1,500 feet, Exhibit 9, adjacent landowner notification 10/08/25. Exhibit 10, adjacent landowner notification 10/16/25 and Exhibit 11, legal advertisement in the Gazette.

Larry Cochran- At the time of this hearing, no written comments were received by the Planning Division concerning this notification.

Larry Cochran- Is that still true?

Grace Di Biase- Yes

Larry Cochran- The granting of a variance from the Agricultural District viewshed requirement will not constitute a grant of special privilege, because the code allows for a variance to be granted per Section 19.06.200(1)(e). In the case of a landowner seeking a variance from the 1,500-foot viewshed restriction of Section 19.10.060 the parcel under

consideration was in existence at the time of the passage of this ordinance; has not been subdivided since the passage of this ordinance; and no prior variance has been granted for an existing RHC.

Larry Cochran- What's...

Grace Di Biase- RHC stands for Rural Housing Certificate, which is the planning permit necessary to site a new residence.

Larry Cochran- Okay.

Larry Cochran- See Exhibit 12, Section 19.06.020(1)(e).

Larry Cochran- This variance request is consistent with the Whitman County Comprehensive Plan.

Larry Cochran- Is there anything else that needs to be added to the Findings of Fact?

Grace Di Biase- No, are there any questions?

Brian Davies- Do we need to go through these questions?

Grace Di Biase- Yes, you have to approve the Findings.

Brian Davies- Approve the Findings first.

Grace Di Biase- Then you can discuss the yes or no questions below.

Brian Davies- I move to approve the Findings.

Micheal Cochran- I second.

Larry Cochran- Finding of Facts have been moved and approved.

Larry Cochran- All those in favor say aye.

Brian Davies- Aye

Michael Cochran- Aye

Larry Cochran- Aye

Ryan Kile- This is Ryan, aye.

Larry Cochran- Opposed
Larry Cochran- Motion carried.

Larry Cochran- Now we have four questions that we have to ask and need a yes vote on from the board members to approve.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Larry Cochran- A) That because of special circumstances applicable to the subject property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings the strict application of zoning standards is found to deprive the subject property rights and privileges enjoyed by other properties under identical zone classifications.

Lary Cochran- Ryan?

Ryan Kile- Yes

Larry Cochran- Michael?

Micheal Cochran- Yes

Larry Cochran- Brian?

Brian Davies- Yes

Larry Cochran- And, yes.

Larry Cochran- B) that the granting of the variance will not be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or be injurious to other properties and improvements in the vicinity of the subject property.

Larry Cochran- Ryan?

Ryan Kile- Yes

Larry Cochran- Michael?

Micheal Cochran- Yes

Larry Cochran- Brian?

Brian Davies- Yes

Larry Cochran- And, yes.

Larry Cochran- C) That the variance is not required solely due to actions by the applicant which prevent direct compliance with use standards applicable to the subject property

Larry Cochran- Ryan?

Ryan Kile- Yes

Larry Cochran- Michael?

Michael Cochran- Yes

Larry Cochran- Brian?

Brian Davies- Yes

Larry Cochran- And, yes.

Larry Cochran- D) that the variance is not required simply for economic benefit constituting a grant of special privilege to the subject property.

Larry Cochran- Ryan?

Ryan Kile- Yes

Larry Cochran- Michael?

Michael Cochran- Yes

Larry Cochran- Brian?

Brian Davies- Yes

Larry Cochran- And, yes.

Staff Recommendations

Larry Cochran- Unless information becomes available at the hearing that contradicts the Findings of Fact for information received to date, and the Board agrees to the... that the application meets the above criteria it would be consistent for the Board to approve this variance request.

Larry Cochran- Is there a motion to approve?

Ryan Kile- This is Ryan, I move to approve.

Brian Davies- I'll second.

Larry Cochran- Moved by Ryan, seconded by Brian.

Larry Cochran- Any further discussion? If not, all those in favor say aye.

Michael Cochran- Aye.

Brian Davies- Aye

Larry Cochran- Aye

Ryan Kile- This is Ryan, aye.

Larry Cochran- Opposed?

Larry Cochran- Motion carried.

Larry Cochran- Variance 25-002 is approved.

Larry Cochran- Anything else before the board?

Grace Di Biase- Nope, not at this time.

Grace Di Biase- Are you ready to adjourn?

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:16

Grace Di Biase
Assistant Planner
Nov. 6, 2025